

East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

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Lawrence Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Via E-mail parksrec@lawrenceks.org

Dear members:

The Board of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association is concerned about the possibility of user fees being charged for the use of city recreation facilities.

Many families and individuals in our area use the facilities at the Community Building and the East Lawrence Recreation Center. In addition to exercise and weight equipment, our residents use basketball and pickleball courts, ping pong and pool tables and other facilities. These facilities and others around town are of particular importance to people who cannot afford gym memberships.

Based upon our anecdotal observations, the facilities serve families, elderly and young people, and provide a safe place for kids to get out of their homes and away from their electronic devices for exercise and time with their peers. With the school closures for Covid, socialization is especially important for young people, and exercise is a public health value for everyone.

If this is being seriously considered, we hope that there is data about how facilities are currently being used, and which populations will be most affected by the decision. We cannot help but be struck by the irony that this is being considered at a time when Lawrence Transit is eliminating its transportation fees for a year, meaning that it would be more feasible than ever for people to access Parks and Rec facilities all over town.

We trust that your recommendations will be well considered. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Barry M. Shalinsky
President, on behalf of the ELNA Board

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